

Modern History Sourcebook:

Karl Marx:

Scientific Socialism, 1844 - 1875

An Epitome

From *Economic & Philosophical Manuscripts*, 1844: The laborer becomes poorer the more wealth he produces, indeed, the more powerful and wide-ranging his production becomes. Labor does not only produce commodities, it produces itself and the laborer as a commodity, and in relation to the level at which it produces commodities. The product of labor is labor, which fixes itself in the object, it becomes a thing, it is the *objectification* of labor. The *objectification of labor* manifests itself so much as a loss of objects, that the laborer is robbed of the most necessary objects, not only to maintain his own life, but even objects with which to labor. Indeed, labor itself becomes an object, which only with the greatest effort and with random interruptions can be acquired. Appropriation of objects manifests itself so much as estrangement, that, the more objects the laborer produces, the fewer he can own and so he plunges deeper under the mastery of his product: Capital.

In this definition--that the laborer is related to the product of his labor as a strange, foreign object, lies all the consequences. For from this hypothesis the following becomes clear: the more the laborer labors, as well as the more powerful the alien, object world which he builds over himself becomes, the poorer he himself becomes, that is, his inner world, as he owns less. The same thing occurs in religion. The more people place faith in God, the less they retain in themselves. The laborer places his life in the object; but now it [his life] belongs less to him than to the object. Therefore, the more this happens, the more deprived of objects the laborer becomes. What the product of his labor is, he is not. Therefore, the greater this product, the less he becomes. The alienation of the laborer in his product has this significance: since his labor is an object, not only does this labor become a separate existence, but it is also separate from him, independent, *alien* to his existence and a self-sufficient power which exists above him, that the life, which he has bestowed on the object, confronts him as something hostile and strange.

What then makes up the alienation of labor? *First*, that labor is *alien* to the laborer, that is, that it does not make up his existence, that he does not affirm himself in his labor, but rather denies himself; he does not feel happy, but rather unhappy; he does not grow physically or mentally, but rather tortures his body and ruins his mind. The laborer feels himself first to be other than his labor and his labor to be other than himself. He is at home when he is not laboring, and when he is laboring he is not at home. His labor is not voluntary, but *constrained, forced* labor. Therefore, it does not meet a need, but rather it is a means to meet some need alien to it. Its estranged character becomes obvious when one sees that as soon as there is no physical or other coercion, labor is avoided like the plague. This alienated labor, in which human beings alienate themselves from themselves, is a labor of self-denial and self-torture. Finally, the alienation of labor manifests itself to the laborer in that this labor does not belong to him, but to someone else; it does not belong to him; while he is doing it he does not belong to himself, but to another. The activity of the laborer is not his own activity. It belongs to someone else, it is *the loss of his self*. The result, therefore, is that the human being (the laborer) does not feel himself to be free except in his animal functions: eating, drinking, and reproducing, at his best in his dwelling or in his clothing, etc., and in his human functions he is no more than an animal. The animal becomes human and the human becomes animal.

A direct consequence of the estrangement of the humans from the product of their labor, from their life-activity, from their species-being, is *the estrangement of humans from humans*. When a human confronts himself as a stranger, so he confronts another human as a stranger. The relationship of humans to their labor, to the product of their labor, and to themselves, is also the relationship of humans to each other, and to the labor of others and to the objects of others. Moreover, this fact, that the individual is estranged from his species-being means that the individual is estranged from other individuals, since each of them is estranged from their own species-being....

This relationship of the laborer to his labor gives birth to the relationship of that labor to the capitalist, or whatever one wishes to name the "labor-master." Private property is also the product, the result, the *natural consequence* of alienated labor, of the alienated relationship of the laborer to nature and to himself. Therefore, private property arises from the analysis of the idea of alienated labor, that is, of alienated humanity, of estranged labor, of estranged life, of estranged humanity. Wages are an unmediated, direct result of estranged labor, and estranged labor is the unmediated, direct source of private property. If the one falls, the other must fall. From the relationship of estranged labor to private property follows the conclusion that the liberation of society from private property, etc., from servitude, expresses its political form in the emancipation of the laborer, and not only the emancipation of the laborer, for in the emancipation of the laborer is contained the emancipation of all humanity, and it contains this because the entirety of human servitude is involved in the relationship of the laborer to production and all relationships of servitude are only modifications and consequences of this primary relationship....

Communism is the positive supersession of private property as human self-estrangement, and hence the true appropriation of the human essence through and for man; it is the complete restoration of man to himself as a social---i.e., human---being, a restoration which has become conscious and which takes place within the entire wealth of previous periods of development. This communism equals humanism; it is the genuine resolution of the conflict between man and nature, and between man and man, the true resolution of the conflict between existence and being, between objectification and self-affirmation, between freedom and necessity, between individual and species. It is the solution of the riddle of history and knows itself to be the solution.

The entire movement of history is therefore both the actual act of creation of communism---the birth of its empirical existence---and, for its thinking consciousness, the comprehended and known movement of its becoming. Its movement---production and consumption---is the sensuous revelation of the movement of all previous production---i.e., the realization or reality of man. Religion, the family, the state, law, morality, science, art, etc., are only *particular modes of production* and therefore come under its general law. The positive supersession of private property, as the appropriation of human life, is therefore the positive supersession of all estrangement, and the return of man from religion, the family, the state, etc., to his human---i.e., social---existence. Religious alienation as such takes place only in the sphere of consciousness, of man's inner life, but economic alienation is that of real life -- its supersession therefore embraces both aspects....

Private property has made us so stupid and one-sided that an object is only ours when we have it, when it exists for us as capital or when we directly possess, eat, drink, wear, inhabit it, etc., in short, when we *use* it. The supersession of private property is therefore the complete emancipation of all human senses and attributes; but it is this emancipation precisely because these senses and attributes have become human, subjectively as well as objectively.

From *Theses on Feuerbach*, 1845: Feuerbach starts out from the fact of religious self-alienation, of the duplication of the world into a religious world and a secular one....He resolves the religious essence into the human essence. But the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of the social relations. Feuerbach, consequently, does not see that the *religious sentiment* is itself a social product, and that the abstract individual whom he analyses belongs to a particular form of society.

From *The German Ideology*, 1846: The various stages of development in the division of labor are just so many different forms of ownership, i.e. the existing stage in the division of labor determines also the relations of individuals to one another with reference to the material, instrument, and product of labor.... As soon as the distribution of labor comes into being, each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a herdsman, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood; while in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, herdsman or critic....

From *The Communist Manifesto*, 1848: The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a

fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. In the earlier epochs of history, we find almost everywhere a complicated arrangement of society into various *orders*, a manifold gradation of social rank. In ancient Rome we have patricians, equites, plebeians, slaves; in the Middle Ages, lords, vassals, guild-masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs; in almost all of these classes, again, subordinate gradations.

What else does the history of ideas prove, than that intellectual production changes its character in proportion as material production is changed? The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class. When people speak of ideas that revolutionize society, they do but express the fact that within the old society the elements of a new one have been created, and that the dissolution of the old ideas keeps even pace with the dissolution of the old conditions of existence. The modern *bourgeois* society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established *new classes, new conditions of oppression, new forms of struggle* in place of the old ones. Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: *it has simplified the class antagonisms*. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: *Bourgeoisie* and *Proletariat*.

From the serfs of the Middle Ages sprang the chartered burghers of the earliest towns. From these burgesses the first elements of the bourgeoisie were developed. The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape, opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie. The East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonization of America, trade with the colonies, the increase in the means of exchange and in commodities generally, gave to commerce, to navigation, to industry, an impulse never before known, and thereby, to the revolutionary element in the tottering feudal society, a rapid

development. The feudal system of industry, under which industrial production was monopolized by closed guilds, now no longer sufficed for the growing wants of the new markets. The manufacturing system took its place. The guild-masters were closed on one side by the manufacturing middle class; division of labor between the different corporate guilds vanished in the face of division of labor in each single workshop.

Meantime the markets kept ever growing, the demand ever rising. Even manufacture no longer sufficed. Thereupon, steam and machinery revolutionized industrial production. The place of manufacture was taken by the giant, Modern Industry, the place of the industrial middle class, by industrial millionaires, the leaders of whole industrial armies, the modern bourgeois. Modern industry has established the world-market, for which the discovery of America paved the way. This market has given an immense development to commerce, to navigation, to communication by land. This development has, in its turn, reacted on the extension of industry; and in proportion as industry, commerce, navigation, railways extended, in the same proportion the bourgeoisie developed, increased its capital, and pushed into the background every class handed down from the Middle Ages. We see, therefore, how the modern bourgeoisie is itself the product of a long course of development, of *a series of revolutions* in the modes of production and of exchange. Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class. An oppressed class under the sway of the feudal nobility, an armed and self-governing association in the medieval commune; here an independent *urban republic* (as in Italy and Germany), there a taxable *third estate* of the monarchy (as in France); afterwards, in the period of manufacture proper, serving either the semi-feudal or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and, in fact, the corner-stone of the great monarchies in general, the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and of the world-market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway. *The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.....*

We see then: the means of production and of exchange, on whose foundation the bourgeoisie built itself up, were generated in *feudal society*. At a certain stage in the development of these means of production and of exchange, the conditions under which feudal society produced and exchanged, the feudal organization of agriculture and manufacturing industry, in one word, the feudal relations of property became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces; they became so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder; they were burst asunder. Into their place stepped free competition, accompanied by a social and political constitution adapted to it, and by the economical and political sway of the bourgeois class.....

In proportion as the bourgeoisie, *i.e.*, Capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed--a class of laborers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labor increases capital. These laborers, who must sell themselves piece-meal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of competition, to all the fluctuations of the market. Owing to the extensive use of machinery and to division of labor, the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous and most easily acquired knack, that is required of him. Hence, the cost of production of a workman is restricted, almost entirely, to the means of subsistence that he requires for his maintenance, and for the propagation of his race. But the price of a commodity, and therefore also of labor, is equal to its cost of production. In proportion, therefore, as the repulsiveness of the work increases, the wage decreases. Nay more, in proportion as the use of machinery and division of labor increases, in the same proportion the burden of toil also increases, whether by prolongation of the working hours, by increase of the work exacted in a given time or by increased speed of the machinery, etc.....

Masses of laborers, crowded into the factory, are organized like soldiers. As privates of the industrial army they are placed under the command of a perfect hierarchy of officers and sergeants. Not only are they slaves of the bourgeois class, and of the bourgeois State; they are daily and hourly enslaved by the machine, by the foreman, and, above all, by the individual bourgeois manufacturer himself. The more openly this despotism proclaims gain to be its end and aim, the more petty, the more hateful and the more embittering it is. Differences of age and sex have no longer any distinctive social validity for the working class. All are instruments of labor, more or less expensive to use, according to their age and sex....The growing competition among the bourgeoisie, and the resulting commercial crises, make the wages of the workers ever more fluctuating. The unceasing improvement of machinery, ever more rapidly developing, makes their livelihood more and more precarious...The modern laborer, instead of rising with the progress of industry, sinks deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of his own class. He becomes a pauper, and pauperism develops more rapidly than population and wealth....

The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

WORKERS OF THE WORLD: UNITE!!

From, *Contributions to the Critique of Political Economy*, 1859: In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness. At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or--what is but a legal expression for the same thing--with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution.

With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations a distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production, which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic or philosophic---in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out..... No social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed; and new, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society itself. Therefore mankind always sets itself only such tasks as it can solve; since, looking at the matter more closely, it will always be found that the task itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution already exist or are at least in the process of formation.

From *Critique of the Gotha Program*, 1875: Since labor is the source of all wealth, no one in society can appropriate wealth except as the product of labor. Therefore, if he himself does not work, he lives by the labor of others and also acquires his culture at the expense of the labor of others. Labor becomes the source of wealth and culture only as

social labor, or, what is the same thing, in and through society. In proportion as labor develops socially, and becomes thereby a source of wealth and culture, poverty and destitution develop among the workers, and wealth and culture among the nonworkers. This is the law of all history hitherto.

Within the co-operative society based on common ownership of the means of production, the producers do not exchange their products; just as little does the labor employed on the products appear here as the value of these products, as a material quality possessed by them, since now, in contrast to capitalist society, individual labor no longer exists in an indirect fashion but directly as a component part of total labor. What we have to deal with here is a communist society, not as it has

developed on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it emerges from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally, and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it emerges. Accordingly, the individual producer receives back from society---after the deductions have been made---exactly what he gives to it. What he has given to it is his individual quantum of labor. For example, he receives a certificate from society that he has furnished such-and-such an amount of labor (after deducting his labor for the common funds); and with this certificate, he draws from the social stock of means of consumption as much as the same amount of labor cost. The same amount of labor which he has given to society in one form, he receives back in another.

This equal right is an unequal right for unequal labor. It recognizes no class differences, because everyone is only a worker like everyone else; but it tacitly recognizes unequal individual endowment, and thus productive capacity, as a natural privilege. It is, therefore, a right of inequality, in its content, like every right. Further, one worker is married, another is not; one has more children than another, and so on and so forth. Thus, with an equal performance of labor, and hence an equal in the social consumption fund, one will in fact receive more than another, one will be richer than another, and so on. To avoid all these defects, right, instead of being equal, would have to be unequal. But these defects are inevitable in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just emerged after prolonged birth pangs from capitalist society.

In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labor, and therewith also the antithesis between mental and physical labor, has vanished;

after labor has become not only a means of life but life's prime want; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-around development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative

wealth flow more abundantly---only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: *From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!*

A "free state" is by no means the aim of the workers, who have got rid of the narrow mentality of humble subjects, to set the state free. *Freedom* consists in converting the state from an organ superimposed upon society into one completely subordinate to it; and today, too, the forms of state are more free or less free to the extent that they restrict the "freedom of the state."....The question then arises: What transformation will the state undergo in communist society? In other words, what social functions will remain in existence there that are analogous to present state functions? This question can only be answered scientifically.... Between capitalist and communist society there lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*.

Bourgeois "freedom of conscience" is nothing but the toleration of all possible kinds of religious freedom of conscience from the witchery of religion. But one chooses not to transgress the "bourgeois" level. The standardization of the working day must include the restriction of female labor, insofar as it relates to the duration, intermissions, etc., of the working day; otherwise, it could only mean the exclusion of female labor from branches of industry that are especially unhealthy for

the female body, or are objectionable morally for the female sex. A general prohibition of child labor is incompatible with the existence of large-scale industry and hence an empty, pious wish. Its realization---if it were possible---would be reactionary, since, with a strict regulation of the working time according to the different age groups and other

safety measures for the protection of children, an early combination of productive labor with education is one of the most potent means for the transformation of present-day society.

Source:

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